AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-13 (cancelled)

14. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 26, characterized in that the medium is air.

15. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, characterized in that the air contains at least one further gaseous medium.

16. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, characterized in that the lyosol is introduced dropwise into the moving air.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 14, characterized in that the lyosol is sprayed into the moving air.

18. (Currently amended) A method according to ~~at least one of~~ claim 14, characterized in that the lyosol ~~particles are~~ is screened according to size by the air stream which is directed in opposition to gravity.

19. (Currently amended) A method according to ~~at least one of~~ claim 14, characterized in that the velocity of the air stream diminishes in the direction of flow.

20. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 26, characterized in that the lyosol ~~particles are~~ is trapped in a layer of water.

21. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 26, characterized in that the lyosol ~~particles are~~ is formed from silicic acid and mineral acid.

22. (Currently amended) A method according to claim ~~13~~ 26, characterized in that the lyosol is formed from a sodium water-glass solution and hydrochloric acid.

23-25. (Cancelled)

26. (New) A method of producing substantially globular aerogels wherein:

i) gel forming components are mixed to produce a lyosol;

ii) the lyosol is introduced into a moving medium which flows substantially against the direction of gravity to form a substantially globular lyogel; and

iii) the substantially globular lyogel is converted to an aerogel.

27. (New) A method of producing substantially globular silylated lyogels wherein:

i) gel forming components are mixed to produce a lyosol;

ii) the lyosol is introduced into a moving medium which flows substantially against the direction of gravity to produce a substantially globular lyogel; and

iii) the substantially globular lyogel is reacted with a silylating agent to form a substantially globular silylated lyogel.